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THE TITLE «*FĀRŪQ*» AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH ‘UMAR I*

‘Umar I, the second caliph of Islam, figures centrally in Muslim traditional sources as the true consolidator of that religion and polity. This view was initially accepted on modern western scholars some of whom compared his overall role to that of St. Paul, “the second man” in Christianity.⁽¹⁾ Gradually, however, few scholars expressed more caution in their assessment of the historicity of such role, owing to the subjection of the traditional reports on him to critical scrutiny and the exposition of a great deal of contradictions and obscurities.⁽²⁾

Lately, note was also made of the fact that no serious attempt was made at examining the religious aspects of the personality and role of the man especially by modern Muslim scholars who, instead, usually present him as a perfect ruler fit even for twentieth century political ideals of democracy, etc.⁽³⁾ On the other hand, note must be made of the new line opened by the

* In the course of working on this paper I had fruitful discussions with Prof. M. J. Kister and made use of the material, especially from manuscriptal sources of his, which he referred me to. For all that I owe him a special debt of gratitude.

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(1) Compare: Sir W. Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate*, London 1883, 283-4; D. S. Margoliouth, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*, London 1905, 162-5, 167, 346; W. R. Smith, “Some Similarities and Differences Between Christianity and Islam”, *The World of Islam*, London 1960, 52.

(2) G. Levi Della Vida, “Omar ibn al-Khattab”, s.v., *E.I.* 1st ed., 982-4 and the sources cited therein.

(3) H. Lazarus-Yafe, “Umar...” in S. Morag & I. Ben Ami eds., *Studies in Geniza*, Jerusalem 1981, 319 inf.

authors of *Hagarism* in the study of that personality and role, where they suggest that the title “*fārūq*” constitutes in fact an Islamic fossilization of a certain Jewish idea of messianism.⁽⁴⁾

All this justifies a further investigation of this title with which ‘Umar was heavily associated to the degree that it became his second name. A task which the present paper tries to accomplish in a way that will hopefully contribute to a better understanding not only to the role and personality of ‘Umar but also indirectly to the literary processes through which the relevant reports on him crystallized. In doing so we shall examine the meaning of “*fārūq*” and the contexts in which its association with ‘Umar were presented by the different lexical, biographical, exegetical, historiographical and other traditional Muslim sources.

1) *Arabic FRQ and Some Semitic Cognates.*

From the root *FRQ* in Arabic, as well as other Semitic languages like Sabaic, Syriac, Hebrew and Aramaic *PRQ*, can be derived verbs, nouns and adjectives denoting division, separation, dispersal and deliverance. Some of these derivations convey clear religious connotations. The verbs *frq* and *tfrq* in Sabaic can mean both to deliver/save and to seek safety/be dispersed/scatter.⁽⁵⁾ Likewise, Syriac ܦܪܩ means both to divide/set apart and to save. And, from the latter meaning comes ܦܪܩܐ = saviour and ܦܪܩܐ = salvation/redemption.⁽⁶⁾ Indeed, both R. Bell and A. Jeffery believed Quranic “*furqān*” to have come from Syriac *perqana* which denotes salvation.⁽⁷⁾ Also noteworthy in this context is the fact that the fifth century Beirūnī explicitly says that “*fārūqā rabbā*” is a Syriac phrase which means “the great redeemer” (*bi-l-suryāniyya ...: al-munajjī al-a’zam*).⁽⁸⁾ He also adds that one of the holy days for the Nestorian Christians was “*al-fārūqa*, meaning salvation, which is the thursday occurring on the 24th day of [their] fasting.”⁽⁹⁾ Finally, “*al-Fārūq*” occurs as a

(4) P. Crone & M. Cook, *Hagarism*, Cambridge 1980, 5.

(5) A. F. L. Beeston *et al.*, *Sabaic Dictionary*, Louvain and Beirut 1982, 46.

(6) M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, *A Syriac-English Glossary*, Wiesbaden 1970, 64-5.

(7) R. Bell, *The Origins of Islam in its Christian Environment*, London 1926, 120; A. Jeffery, *The Koran, Selected Suras Translated*, N. Y. 1958, 228.

(8) Beiruni, *al-Athar al-Baqiya*, Leipzig 1923, 16.

(9) *Ibid.*, 311.

title of Jesus Christ himself in an undated rendering into Arabic of a story attributed to Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.⁽¹⁰⁾

In two Old Testament instances, the Hebrew cognates, **יִפְרָקֶנּוּ** and **פָּרַק**, convey “to be delivered” and “attone for”, respectively.⁽¹¹⁾ **פָּרַקָן** in the *Mishna* denotes “rescue”.⁽¹²⁾ And in several instances in the Babylonian Talmud there occur Hebrew-Aramaic words denoting both salvation and rescue.⁽¹³⁾

As for Arabic *FRQ*, our lexical sources give numerous derivations. Noteworthy are those which relate to the stems *faraqa* and *farraqa*, the abstract nouns of which are *farq* (*furq*)/*furqān* and *lafriq/tafriqa*, respectively. The main difference between the two verbal forms is that *faraqa* (pl.: *yafrūqu/yafrīqu*) denotes “to make distinct/clear”, while *farraqa* means “divided/separated.”⁽¹⁴⁾

Several derivations of these two forms do occur in the *Qurʾān*. In few cases the meaning given to them depends on their reading. E.g., while it is more plausible to read 2/50 as “*farraqnā bikum al-baḥr*” meaning “we split the sea with you”, 17/106 could be read: “*wa-qurʾānan farraqnāhu/farraqnāhu*” to mean both “we revealed separately” and “we made distinct/clear”.

As for the abstract noun “*furqān*” it occurs as a name of a whole scripture (as in *Qurʾān* 2/53, 3/4, 21/48), or of a specific chapter of it (*sūra* 25) or else, as in 2/185; 8/29, 41, in the meanings of salvation, victory and proof.⁽¹⁵⁾ Note that in these sources *Qurʾān* 8/41 in

(10) *Qiṣṣat al-Qiddīsa Maryam al-Miṣriyya*, Ms. of the Monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai, The Library of Congress, Arabic 538, fol. 371 (1): “... *wa-Kāna lī taʾāmun lā yaḥnā, rajāʾī al-fārūq, wa-Kunlu aslaʾīnu bihi, alladhī huwa qadīrun ʾalā Kullī shayʾ.*”

(11) *Psalms* 136/24: **יִפְרָקֶנּוּ מִצָּרָיו** and *Daniel* 4/24: **חֲסֹאךָ בְּצִדְקָה פָּרַק**.

(12) *Ketuvot* 4/4: ... **חַיִּיב בְּמוֹעֵתָהּ וּבְפִרְקָתָהּ**.

(13) *ʾIrkhīn* 33/1: **פָּרַקָךְ** (salvation/rescue); *Kidhushīn* 21/1: **מִפְרָק** (he was saved/rescued); *Minḥot* 100/2: **מִפְרָק** (he was saved/rescued); *Bikhorot* 32/3, 39/1 and *Megila* 27/1: **אִיסְרוּקִי** (to be saved); *Kituvot* 52/2, 57/2: **פָּרַקָתָהּ** (rescue/salvation).

(14) E. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Beirut repr. 1980, 6/2383; Ibn Fāris (d. 395 H.), *Muʿjam*, Cairo 1369 H., 4/493-5; Jawhari, *Tāj*, Cairo 1282 H., 2/113-4; Zanjani, *Tahdhīb*, Cairo 1952, 2/594; Rāzī, *Mukhtār*, Cairo 1926, 500-1; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān* Cairo n.d., 12/177-8; Zabīdī, *Tāj*, Cairo 1306 H., 7/43-6.

(15) Ibn Manẓūr 12/177; Zabīdī 7/45-6; Fayrūzabādī, *Baṣṣaʾir*, Cairo 1969 4/186; Ibn Durayd (d. 321 H.), *Jamhara*, Haydarabad 1345 H., 2/400; Azhari (d. 370 H.), *Tahdhīb*, Cairo 1964, 9/105; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, in the margin of Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāya*, Cairo 1322, 3/230; E. Lane 6/2386.

particular was usually taken to refer to the battle of Badr as "the day of the *furqān*." (16)

In one *hadith* source *furqān* was also interpreted as a mediator or intercessor (*shāfi'*/ *mushaffi'*). (17) But some lexical sources do not fail to note that *furqān* could mean "dawn" too because of the distinction and clarity it brings. The masoretic phrases quoted in this context are: "*ṭala'a/ṣaṭa'a al-furqān*" and "*faraqa al-ṣubḥ*". (18) Such meaning is based on interpreting "*faraqa*" as became clear. And in this context Ibn 'Abbās was quoted as saying "*faraqa lī ra'y*" (an opinion was made clear to me). (19)

But *furqān* is not the only infinitive (abstract) form of *faraqa*. (20) The other two ones noted as such are *farq* and *furq*. It is worth noting that these two forms are given as alternative names for the Qur'ān itself; i.e., besides "*furqān*". In this context the following verse is usually brought to support such substitution: "*wa-mushrikiyyin Kāfirin bi-l-furqi/bi-l-farqi*" (and a polytheist disbelieving in the *furq/farq*). (21)

It is also interesting to see how Muhammad himself was described by an anonymous *ḥadīth* as: "*farqun bayna al-nās, 'ay: yafruqu/yufraqu bayna al-mu'minīn wa-l-kāfirīn bi-taṣḍīqihi wa-takdhībīh.*" (Muhammad is a *farq* between people, i.e., he/believing or disbelieving in him affects the distinction (clarification) of believers from infidels). (22)

The above-mentioned tradition is a highly isolated one for which I could not trace any traditional authority or source. However, it refers to Muhammad in a term which is an alternative abstract noun synonymous to *furqān* itself. We shall see below how,

(16) See also the early source of Ibn Ishāq (d. 150 H.), *K. al-Siyar wa-l-Maghāzī*, through the recension of Yūnus b. Bukayr, Damascus 1978, 130 and al-Ṣāghānī, *al-Takmila*, Cairo 1977, 5/13.

(17) Al-Hākim, *Mustadrak*, Riyad 1968, 3/578.

(18) E. Lane 6/2386; Ibn Fāris 4/494; Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-Balāgha*, Cairo 1923 2/198.

(19) Ibn al-Athīr 3/214; Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Nathīr*, in the margin of Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid*.

(20) It seems that its close association with the scripture and occurrence as a name for it caused one source, Iṣfahānī 3/230, to mention the possibility of considering it as a proper noun.

(21) Compare: Jawharī 2/113; Ibn Manẓūr 12/177; Fayrūzabādī 4/186; Lane 6/2385.

(22) Ibn Manẓūr 12/177; Ibn Al-Athīr and Suyūṭī 3/214.

according to another unique tradition, Muhammad was specified as one of those who were considered as “*fārūq*”.

Let us now consider the active participle (*'ism al-fā'il*) of *faraqa*, namely *fāriq*. Actually, our attention to *fāriq* was drawn in the context of the attempts made by some of these sources to explain what *furqān* meant. Here, the usual explanation given is “*Kull mā faraqa/furiqa bihi bayna al-ḥaqq wa-l-bāṭil*” (anything that a distinction is made by/through it between truth and falsity).⁽²³⁾ Note, however, the important variant readings of this definition in some sources. In Ibn Manẓūr as well as another late source the phrase “*wa-l-ḥalāl wa-l-ḥarām*” is added in a way that gives a clear legal dimension to such definition.⁽²⁴⁾ Another noteworthy issue is the vocalization of *frq* and *yfrq*. We have seen that almost all our lexical sources relate *farq*, *furq*, *furqān*, *fāriq* and *fārūq* to the first stem, *faraqa* in the sense of affecting a distinction/clarification. In the printed editions of few sources, however, *furqān* and *fārūq* are related also to vocalised *farraqa* meaning split/separate. Thus in Fayrūzabādī we read: “*furq* and *furqān*: (are) the Qur'ān and anything that by which a separation is made (*mā furriqa bihi*) between truth and falsity.”⁽²⁵⁾ In Ibn Manẓūr the confusion is even clearer: “*furqān*” is defined as “*Kull mā furiqa bihi...*”, while for “*fārūq*” the phrase used is “*mā farraqa/yufarriqu bayna shay'ayn/al-ḥaqq wa-l-bāṭil*.”⁽²⁶⁾

Tracing the beginnings of the intervention of the reading *farraqa* and the confusion between it and *faraqa* will carry us beyond the scope of the present inquiry. We tend to believe, however, that the roots of such confusion lie in the variant readings of some Quranic occurrences where “*al-furqān*” could also be presented as a scripture whose verses were revealed separately or on different occasions. One must also remember that the stem *farraqa* does indeed mean splitted/separated. Hence, already in Ibn Durayd (d. 321 H.) we are faced with the equation of the unvocalized verb *frq* with “*faṣṣala*” in the very context of defining what *fārūq* was.⁽²⁷⁾ About half a century later, Azharī (d. 370 H.) used *farraqa* to explain the Quranic reference to both the Bible and the

(23) E. Lane 6/2385; Jawharī 2/113; Azharī 9/105; Ibn Fāris 4/493; Zabīdī 7/43.

(24) Ibn Manẓūr 12/177; Ibn al-Athīr 3/214.

(25) Fayrūzabādī 4/186.

(26) Ibn Manẓūr 12/177-8.

(27) Ibn Durayd 2/399.

Qur'ān as *furqāns*.⁽²⁸⁾ On the other hand, towards the end of the fourth century, Ibn Fāris (d. 395 H.) could still define *fārūq* as somebody who makes the distinction of things. He also equated *yafriqu* with *yafṣilu* — both in the first stem.⁽²⁹⁾

Indeed, Ibn Durayd himself adds to the above-mentioned definition of *fārūq* the notion that 'Umar was called as such "because he demonstrated (*aḏhara*) Islam in Mecca and thus affected the distinction (*fa-faraqa*) between belief and infidelity (*al-'imān wa-l-Kufr*) [there]."⁽³⁰⁾ It is interesting to see how this notion of demonstrating Islam in Mecca, in the sense of affecting a distinction between belief and infidelity there, reappears in later sources as an alternative explanation to the one of making a distinction (var.: separating) between truth and falsity (*bayna al-ḥaqq wa-l-bāṭil*).⁽³¹⁾ Finally there was a third alternative explanation for calling 'Umar as such where it was said that "God struck the truth on his tongue" *ḍaraba al-lāhu bi-l-ḥaqqi 'alā lisānih*.⁽³²⁾

But "*fārūq*" is only a less common intensive adjective of the verb *faraqa*, while its active participle is of course *fāriq*. And it is interesting to see how Ibn Durayd, who notes the *fā'ul* conjugation, does not fail to mention that 'Umar was not only called *fārūq* but *fāriq* too.⁽³³⁾

The same conjugation of "*fāriq*" reappears in two later sources in order to interpret not only *fārūq* but *furqān* too. Iṣfahānī notes that 'Umar was called *fārūq* "because of being *fāriq* between truth and falsity." (*li-kawnihi fāriqan bayna al-ḥaqq wa-l-bāṭil*).⁽³⁴⁾ For Ibn al-Athīr calling the Qur'ān "*al-furqān*" meant that it was a *fāriq* between truth and falsity too.⁽³⁵⁾

Another occurrence of this conjugation is Qur'ān 77/4 where we meet the feminine plural form "*al-fāriqāt*". It is interesting to see how two of the above quoted sources, Iṣfahānī and Fayrūzabādī, interpret *fāriqāt* as the angels who descend with the distinction between things/truth and falsity.⁽³⁶⁾ Turning to the Quranic

(28) Azharī 9/105.

(29) Ibn Fāris 4/495.

(30) Ibn Durayd 2/399.

(31) Ibn Manẓūr 12/178; Zabīdī 7/43.

(32) Ibn Manẓūr, *ibid.*; Zabīdī, *ibid.*; Zamakhsharī 2/198.

(33) Ibn Durayd 3/389.

(34) Al-Iṣfahānī 3/230.

(35) Ibn al-Athīr 3/214.

(36) Fayrūzabādī 4/186; Iṣfahānī 3/230.

commentaries we find that the relatively early Ibn Qutayba (d. 276 H.) and Tustarī (d. 282 H.) understood “*fāriqāl*” as the angels who affect such distinction (*tafruqu*) either between truth and falsity⁽³⁷⁾ or between *sunna* and heretical novelty (*bid'a*) or, else, between what is lawful and unlawful (*ḥalāl wa-ḥarām*).⁽³⁸⁾

Further details on the development of the interpretation of this term can be found in the exegetical traditions brought by Ṭabarī (d. 310 H.). From the *isnād* and content of these traditions we learn about the crystallization of two distinct notions around the mid-second century. One is attributed either to Abū Sāliḥ (Bādhām, d. 101 H.) on the authority of Ismā'īl (b. Abī Khālid, d. 146 H.), or to Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68 H.) through a “family *isnād*” ending with M. b. Sa'd al-'Awfī (d. 276 H.) on the authority of his great grandfather 'Aṭīyya (d. 111-27 H.). This tradition interprets *fāriqāl* as “the angels who affect distinction (*tafruqu*) between truth and falsity.”⁽³⁹⁾

The second notion brought by Ṭabarī confirms the same element of making distinction between truth and falsity. However it interprets *fāriqāl* as the verses of the Qu'rān itself, whose revelation does so. And from the chain of *isnād* of the tradition which brings it (Sa'īd b. Abī 'Arūba, d. 155 H., from Qatāda, d. 117-8 H.) we learn that such notion was also current around mid-second century.

Later commentary sources reiterate these two notions and add a third one which says that *fāriqāl* are the winds which separate and scatter the clouds. One of these sources, Ṭabarsī, attributes such a notion to Mujāhid.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Others either bring these views at random or in a selective way.⁽⁴¹⁾ Finally, Rāzī brings a fourth one which says that *fāriqāl* are “the missions of prophets” who also “affect the distinction between truth and falsity, monotheism and infidelity.”⁽⁴²⁾

(37) Tustarī, *Tafsīr*, Cairo 1329 H., 114.

(38) Ibn Qutayba, *Tafsīr*, Cairo 1958, 505.

(39) Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, Cairo 1929, 29/142-3.

(40) Ṭabarsī, *Majma'*, Beirut 1954, 29/156.

(41) Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, Cairo 1354 H., 4/173; Nasafī *Tafsīr*, Beirut n.d., 4/322; Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, Cairo 1344 H., 583; Maḥallī and Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* Cairo n.d., 497; Abu al-Sa'ūd, *Tafsīr*, in the margin of Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ*, Cairo 1308 H., 8/325-6; al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsin*, Cairo 1960, 17/6020.

(42) Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ*, op. cit., 8/290. Compare also with Naysābūrī, *Gharā'ib*, in the margin of Ṭabarī 29/126-33.

To sum up the lexical evidence brought forth so far, we may safely say that the intensive adjective "*fārūq*", and the regular conjugation of the active participle, *fāriq*, relate heavily to *faraqa*, the first stem of Arabic *FRQ*, which conveys the sense of affecting distinction and clarity and even of demonstrating one thing, especially a belief, in contrast to another. Such sense prevails in spite of some intervention in the form of certain readings of derivations from the second stem, *farraqa*, which conveys the meaning of to split and separate. However, when viewed in the religious contexts of their occurrences, *fārūq*, *fāriq* and the two infinite forms, *farq* and *furqān*, convey a sense of distinction of a true faith as opposed to infidelity and unbelief, to whose emergence is also attached the sense of salvation and redemption.

In such sense these concepts heavily correspond to several Semitic cognates which reflect certain Judeo-Christian currents of messianic beliefs in such awaited redemption and which prevailed in the area in pre-Islam. However, the intervention of the readings from *farraqa* and the addition of the legal element of "*ḥalāl wa-ḥarām*" in such "*tafriq*" undoubtedly affected the undermining of this messianic and religious sense. In what follows we shall proceed to examine the way in which the association of the title "*fārūq*" with 'Umar was presented in Muslim sources, with attention being paid to other early Islamic figures who are also reported to have borne it.

2) 'Umar and Others.

Although "*fārūq*" was heavily associated with 'Umar I to the extent that it almost became his second name, Muslim sources confirm that others also bore this epithet. Of these mention must be made of two pre-Islamic figures whose very names are brought in connection with the fact that they were considered *fārūqs*. They are: Jabala b. Asāf and Zubayd b. Mas'ūd, both from the Kalb tribe of the Syrian confederation of Qudā'a. From the other titles they bore and the reported poetry in their praise one may assume that they held responsible posts of leadership, though no religious connotations could be discerned. The fact of bearing the title *fārūq* was mentioned by the early source of Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 204 H.) and was reiterated by only two later ones, one of

whom, however, quoting another early third century source, the *Ansāb* of Abū 'Ubayd (d. 224 H.).⁽⁴³⁾

Some, similarly isolated traditions mention the Prophet Muhammad too as being one of those who bore this title. Note was made above of one such tradition which relates to him by the abstract noun “*fārq*” in the context of the distinction affected by believing in him. In yet another obscure tradition it was explicitly said that his name in the *zabūr* (*Psalms*) was *fārūq*.⁽⁴⁴⁾ And the same notion is confirmed by a third source, the pseudo-Wāqidī on *Futūḥ al-Shām* in the form of a unique tradition on the occupation of the city of Ḥalab by Abū 'Ubayda. It is related there how the latter was asked by the Patriarch of that city, who later professed Islam, whether “your prophet is the one who is known from the Evangelion, the appearance of whom undoubtedly was foreseen by Christ, who is the *fārūq* who affects the distinction between truth and falsity and who is the generous, orphan prophet whose parents would die and who would be sponsored by his grandfather and his uncle ...?” To this, we are told, Abū 'Ubayda responded: “Yes, he is our prophet.”⁽⁴⁵⁾

The title “*fārūq*” was strongly associated in some sources with the name of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib too. The third century Shī'ite traditionist, Furāt al-Kūfī, attributes to 'Alī the saying : “I am the *fārūq* who affects the distinction between truth and falsity and I am the one who enters my followers to paradise and my enemies to hell.”⁽⁴⁶⁾ The same source also brings a tradition of 'Imrān b. Miḥān (Abū Rajā' al 'Uṭāridī, d. 107-9 H.) which attributes to the companion Abū Dharr the saying that 'Alī was “... the greater *ṣiddīq* and the supreme *fārūq*...”⁽⁴⁷⁾

Other, later sources confirm the notion that 'Alī was called “*al-*

(43) Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-Nasab al-Kabīr*, Ms. Escorial, Libro tercero ultimo, fols. 393, 396 (I am indebted to M. J. Kister for this source). Zabīdī, 7/48, mentions only Jabala b. Asāf as bearing this title and quotes for that the *Ansāb* of the third century Abū 'Ubayd. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī (d. 723 H.) gives the full genealogy of the two and the poetry related in their honour. Their other titles mentioned by him are: *al-ra'īs* (the chief) for Jabala and *al-Jawād* (the generous) for Zubayd. See his: *Talkhīṣ Majma' Al-'Ādāb*, Cairo 1965, 4 (3)/19-21.

(44) Khargūshī, *Lawāmi'*, Ms. Vaticana, Ar. 1642, fol. 88(a). (I am indebted to M. J. Kister for this source.)

(45) Pseudo-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, Cairo 1954, 1/190.

(46) *Tafsīr Furāt*, Najaf n.d., 13.

(47) *Ibid.*, 26.

fārūq al-akbar".⁽⁴⁸⁾ But it is a mistake to think that such information appears only in Shī'ite sources. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, for example, was quoted as bringing in his *Manāqib* a prophetic tradition with full *isnād*, according to which Muhammad indeed said to 'Alī: "you are the greater *ṣiddīq* and the *fārūq* who affects the distinction between truth and falsity".⁽⁴⁹⁾ Finally, Ibn Taymiyya confirms, in a work which was initially meant to provide a Sunni argument against the Shī'a, that the Prophet said about 'Alī: "this is the *fārūq* of my *umma* who affects the distinction between truth and falsity".⁽⁵⁰⁾ Still, Ibn Taymiyya argues, it was 'Umar and not 'Alī with whom this title became eventually associated.

Such association with 'Umar is indeed confirmed by a diversity of Muslim sources from various genres. However, there is a wide disagreement over the questions of who gave him this title and in what circumstances this was done; a fact which probably led some early as well as late compilers to bring this information without going into any details.⁽⁵¹⁾ Others limited themselves to only explaining that he was called as such because he declared Islam in Mecca and affected or will affect the distinction between truth and falsity.⁽⁵²⁾

In the course of this study we shall also see few, especially second and third century sources, who do not mention 'Umar as being called *fārūq* at all. Noteworthy at this stage is *K. Nasab Quraysh* of Muṣ'ab al-Zubayrī (d. 236 H.) who only states that he was one of the early Muhājirūn and the first to be called *amīr al-muslimīn*.⁽⁵³⁾ However, those sources which give some details on who called 'Umar by this title and in what circumstances this was done, split between three main notions:

(48) Al-Fuwaṭī, 4 (3)/21-2.

(49) Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī, *Dhakhā'ir al-'Uqbā*, Ms. Zāhiriyya, general/4808/29. Compare with a similar tradition from Ibn 'Abbās brought by Dhahabī, *Mizān*, 2/416-7.

(50) Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-Sunna*, Cairo 1962, 1/111.

(51) E.g., Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245 H.), *al-Muḥabbar*, Beirut n.d., 303; *idem*, *al-Munammaq*, Haydarabad 1964, 510; Dhahabī, *Tadhkira*, Beirut n.d., 1/5; *idem*, *Siyar*, Cairo n.d., 1/101; Ṣafadī, *Umarā' Dimashq*, Damascus 1955, 189.

(52) Compare: Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, Beirut 1970, 3/48; Ja'dī, *Tabaqāt*, Cairo 1957, 38; Ibn al-Athīr, *Lubāb*, Cairo 1356 H., 2/191; Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-'Arab*, Cairo 1975, 19/147.

(53) Ed. Cairo 1953, 347.

- a) The Prophet did so when 'Umar professed Islam.
- b) God/Jibrīl did so in connection with the revelation of Qur'ān 4/60.
- c) It was "*ahl al-Kitāb*" (people of the scripture) who called him *fārūq*.

In what follows we shall proceed to scrutinize the traditional information on each of these notions.

3) 'Umar's Conversion.

The idea that the Prophet called 'Umar "*fārūq*" appears in some biographical and historiographical sources from the third century on. Ibn Sa'd (d. 230 H.), 'Umar b. Shabba (d. 262 H.), Ṭabarī (d. 310 H.) as well as some later sources attribute to 'Ā'isha a tradition to that effect.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Its *isnād* runs : Wāqidī (d. 207 H.) → Ya'qūb b. Mujāhid (Medinese d. 150 H.) → Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm (Medinese, d. 119 H.) → Dhakwān (d. 63 H.) → 'Ā'isha.

A second tradition brought by Ibn Sa'd, this time not from Wāqidī but from Azraqī (d. 212-22 H.), attributes to the Prophet via Ayyūb b. Mūsā (Meccan d. 132 H.) the saying: "God put the truth on the tongue and heart of 'Umar and he is the *fārūq* by whom God made the distinction between truth and falsity."⁽⁵⁵⁾

But these traditions, as well as other unspecified ones brought by other sources,⁽⁵⁶⁾ do not tell the exact circumstances in which the Prophet gave 'Umar this title. However, such a gap is filled by a separate tradition, brought in the name of Ibn 'Abbās, which attributes to 'Umar a story on his conversion including the Prophet's naming him *fārūq* on that occasion.

In an attempt to trace this tradition, we notice that only few, relatively late and mainly non-*sīra* or *ḥadīth* sources, bring it, often without *isnād*, source or even its attribution to Ibn 'Abbās in the

(54) Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqāt*, Beirut 1957, 3/271; 'Umar b. Shabba, *Tārīkh al-Madīna*, Cairo n.d., 662 (I am indebted to Kister for it); Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, Beirut 1967, 4/195; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib* ... 'Umar, Beirut 1982, 19; Nawawī, *Tahdhīb al-'Asmā'*, Cairo n.d., 2/4; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, Cairo 1280 H., 4/57; Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'*, Beirut 1986, 128.

(55) Ibn Sa'd, 3/270; Ibn al-Jawzī, 19; Nawawī 2/4; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, *op. cit.*, 4/57.

(56) Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir al-Ināfa*, Kuwait 1964, 1/87: it is either the Prophet or *ahl al-Kitāb* who called him *fārūq*. Ibn Manẓūr, 7/43, gives all the alternative views without mentioning any traditional source.

first place.⁽⁵⁷⁾ One of these, Dhahabī (d. 748 H.) states explicitly that the *isnād* of this tradition is weak (*ḍaʿīf*).⁽⁵⁸⁾ Suyūṭī (d. 911 H.) and Haythamī (d. 974 H.) bring it and point to two earlier sources, Abū Nuʾaym (d. 430 H.) and Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571 H.) as having brought its full *isnād*.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Finally, Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852 H.) brings the source and authority on this tradition which are confirmed by two works of Abū Nuʾaym.⁽⁶⁰⁾

From the information brought by these sources, it seems clear that the initial and only early source for this tradition is the *Tārīkh* of the mid-third century Muhammad b. ʿUthmān b. Abī Shayba. Its *isnād* runs backwards through usually unidentified chains though the authority on it seems to be Ishāq b. ʿAbdullāh b. Abī Farwa (Medinese d. 136 H.) who was not accepted on his contemporary Zuhri (d. 124 H.) and the biographer Ibn Saʿd, and whose traditions, as we shall see below, were completely ignored by Ibn Ishāq as well as the *ḥadīth* scholars.⁽⁶¹⁾

As for its content, this tradition attributes to Ibn ʿAbbās questioning ʿUmar on how he was called *fārūq*. In response ʿUmar is quoted as relating how, after he confessed Islam at the house of Arqam where the Prophet and a handful of his followers were hiding, he insisted to demonstrate that in public. So, together with Ḥamza, he took the Prophet in a march into the Kaʿba. On that occasion, we are told, the Prophet called him “*fārūq*” since he affected the distinction of truth and falsity.

In an attempt to evaluate this tradition, a cross-examination was conducted into the various traditions on the story of ʿUmar’s conversion as they were brought by the major *sīra*, historiographical, *ḥadīth* and other works. Let us start with the *sīra* works where this story was told in two traditional versions. One of them, considered by Ibn Ishāq as Medinese, relates in the name of ʿUmar how he went out one day in an attempt to kill Muhammad. He met a convert who told him that his sister, Fāṭima, and cousin/son-

(57) Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, *op. cit.*, 19-20; *idem*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Haydarabad 1355, 1/103-4; al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī, *al-Riyāḍ al-Nāḍira*, Ṭanṭā 1953, 1/245-6; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī 4 (3)/22.

(58) *Tārīkh al-Islām*, Cairo 1367 H., 1/104-5.

(59) Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafāʾ*, *op. cit.*, 127-8; al-Haythamī, *al-Ṣawāʾiq al-Muḥriqa*, Cairo n.d., 91-2 (I am indebted to Kister for this source).

(60) Ibn Hajar, *Iṣāba*, Cairo 1971, 4/591, 8/62-3; Abū Nuʾaym, *Ḥilya*, Cairo 1932, 1/40; *idem*, *Dalāʾil*, Haydarabad 1950, 195-6.

(61) See on him: Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, Haydarabad 1325 H., 1/240-2.

in-law, Sa'īd b. Zayd were also followers of Muhammad. Aroused by this, 'Umar entered angrily their house and hit them. But, feeling sorry and being moved by the sight of his sister's blood, he asked to be allowed to read a sheet which they had, containing chapter 20 (*Ṭaha*) of the Qur'ān. Following that he felt close to conversion, asked to be shown Muhammad's hiding place, went there and professed Islam.

This Medinese tradition ends at this stage and does not contain the element of the Prophet calling him "*fārūq*" on that occasion. As such it was brought by Ibn Ishāq through the two recensions of Ibn Hishām and Yūnus b. Bukayr.⁽⁶²⁾ Few later *sīra* works bring it, some with full *isnād* on the authority of the Medinese, Usāma b. Zayd b. Aslam, who was a contemporary of Ibn Ishāq.⁽⁶³⁾ Most others, however, bring it, like Ibn Ishāq does, without *isnād* and often in an abridged form or moulded with other, albeit similar, Medinese traditions.⁽⁶⁴⁾ One of these traditions was attributed to 'Umar via Anas b. Mālik and was brought by Ibn Sa'd.⁽⁶⁵⁾ It is very similar in content to the one by Usāma b. Zayd and, like it too, does not include the element of calling 'Umar *fārūq* on that occasion.

The second tradition on the conversion of 'Umar is a Meccan one brought also by Ibn Ishāq on the authority of Ibn Abī Najīh (d. 131 H.) who transmits it from Mujāhid and 'Aṭā'. According to it, 'Umar relates how he followed the Prophet to the Ka'ba, hid behind him, heard him reciting chapter 69 of the Qur'ān (*al-Ḥāqqa*) and his heart fell for Islam.⁽⁶⁶⁾ A third tradition, similar in content to this Meccan one was brought by Ibn Ḥanbal and attributed to 'Umar by Shurayḥ b. 'Ubayd.⁽⁶⁷⁾

(62) Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, Beirut 1975, 1/295-7; Ibn Ishāq, *Kitāb al-Siyar wa-l-Maghāzī*, Damascus 1978, 184.

(63) E.g. : Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *'Uyūn*, Beirut 1974, 1/222-4; Ḥalabī, *Insān*, Cairo 1320, 1/358-64; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, Cairo 1280, 4/55-6; al-Nāzillī, *Maḥza*, Cairo 1293, 34 (I am indebted to Kister for noting this last source).

(64) Balkhī/Muqaddasī, *al-Bad'*, Paris 1916, 5/88-90; Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar*, Cairo 1981, 3/171-3; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, Cairo 1932, 3/79-81; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jawāmi' al-Sīra*, Cairo n.d., 51; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, Beirut 1965, 2/84-7; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, Beirut 1957, 2(4)/723-4; Abū al-Fidā, *Tārīkh*, n.d.p., 1/120; Nuwayrī 16/253-6.

(65) *Tabaqāt*, *op. cit.*, 3/267-9. See also: Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣafwat*, *op. cit.* 1/103; Suyūṭī, *al-Khaṣā'is*, Cairo 1967, 1/328-9.

(66) Ibn Hishām 1/297/8; Dawādārī 3/171-3; Ibn Kathīr 3/81; Ḥalabī 1/358-64.

(67) Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Cairo, 1313 H., 1/17-8; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, 1/125; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣafwat* 1/102; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, 4/53-4; Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba* 4/590/1;

Other traditions speak about the steadfastness of 'Umar in his new faith, his insistence to demonstrate it, how he was beaten for it by Quraysh and the protection he received from al-'Āṣ b. Wā'il.⁽⁶⁸⁾ This last element was the only one brought by Bukhārī who, like other *ḥadīth* classicists, does not bring the usual *sīra* traditions on the conversion of 'Umar mentioned above and does not mention at all his being called *fārūq*.⁽⁶⁹⁾

On the whole, it is striking to see how in none of the traditions cited above from *sīra*, *ṭabaqāt*, historiographical, *ḥadīth* and other works, does the element of calling 'Umar *fārūq* on the occasion of his conversion occur. We also note that some early as well as late sources treat the story of conversion and the notion of 'Umar being called *fārūq* in a completely separate way. Ibn Sa'd is an example to such treatment. We have seen how on one occasion he brings the 'Ā'isha tradition which says that the Prophet gave him this title but fails to mention this element when speaking about the conversion of 'Umar. Ṭabarī, in his turn does not deal with the issue of conversion at all but brings the 'Ā'isha tradition from Ibn Sa'd as one of other alternative views on who gave 'Umar this title.

We have also seen how the very fact of calling 'Umar *fārūq* was not unanimously accepted on, or at least not noted by all third century compilers of *nasab*, *ḥadīth* and other literary branches. Muṣ'ab al-Zubayrī and the *ḥadīth* classicists do not recognize him by it. Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245 H.) notes it but does not say who gave it to him. And Ibn Qutayba (d. 276 H.) only says that he was named *fārūq* "because he declared Islam and called for it while others concealed it and, thus, he affected the distinction between truth and falsity."⁽⁷⁰⁾

Even more striking is the fact that the major biographical works, starting with that of Ibn Ishāq, completely ignore the element of calling 'Umar *fārūq* on the occasion of his

Suhaylī, *Rawḍ*, Cairo 1970, 3/277-8 (quoting Ibn Sunjur); Suyūṭī, *Khaṣā'is*, 1/230-2 (who also brings another, albeit similar tradition attributed to Jābir b. 'Abdullāh and quotes for it the *Musnad* of Ibn Abī Shayba).

(68) Ibn Ishāq (through Yūnus b. Bukayr), 184-5; Ibn Hishām 1/298-9; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās 1/122-5; Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd*, 4/55-7; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* 3/81-2; Ḥalabī 1/358-64; Daḥlān, *Sīra*, in the margin of Ḥalabī, 1/296-304; Nuwayrī 16/256-7.

(69) Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Beirut 1981, 4/242. See also Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Beirut n.d., 7/111-6; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, Cairo 1952, 1/38-40; al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak*, *op. cit.*, 3/80-95.

(70) Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif*, Cairo 1934, 78.

conversion. Such element is present only in the tradition attributed to Ibn 'Abbās and is picked up only by Ibn Abī Shayba as quoted by Abū Nu'aym, Ibn 'Asākir and few later sources. Of the *sīra* sources proper only three add this element in the course of their review of the different variants on 'Umar's conversion either without noting the discrepancy involved or intentionally avoiding dealing with it.⁽⁷¹⁾

4) *'Umar and Qur'ān 4/60.*

A number of various sources bring the notion that it was rather God himself or angel Jibrīl who gave 'Umar the title *fārūq*. One of them is the lexicographer Azharī cited above who, however, does not mention any traditional source.⁽⁷²⁾ Ibn al-Jawzī, in his turn, quotes a tradition by the Kufan successor al-Nazzāl b. Sabra al-Hilālī which attributes to 'Alī the saying that God called 'Umar *fārūq* and he affected the distinction between truth and falsity.⁽⁷³⁾

This latter tradition was brought also by al-Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī together with other similar ones in content.⁽⁷⁴⁾ One of them is attributed to Ibn 'Abbās and quotes the Prophet as saying that Jibrīl told him that 'Umar's name in heaven is *fārūq*.

The same idea was brought also by Khargūshī but without relating it to Ibn 'Abbās.⁽⁷⁵⁾ In this context Khargūshī brings another tradition which says that Jibrīl called 'Umar by this title following his killing of a *munāfiq* (hypocrite). And, in itself, this incident was connected in two *manāqib* sources with the revelation of Qur'ān 4/60. While one of them attributes it to the Kūfan, al-Sha'bī (d. 103-10 H.), the other makes it a tradition of Ibn 'Abbās.⁽⁷⁶⁾

Roughly speaking, verse 4/60 warns against those who insincerely allege to have believed in what has been revealed to Muhammad

(71) Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh al-Khamīs*, Cairo n.d., 1/296; Ḥalabī 1/364; Daḥlān 1/300.

(72) Azharī 9/106.

(73) Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 19-20.

(74) Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī, *al-Riyāḍ*, *op. cit.*, 1/246-7.

(75) *Lawāmi'*, fol. 107 (a).

(76) Muḥibb al-Ṭabarī, *Riyāḍ* 1/246 and Anonymous, *Manāqib al-Ṣaḥāba*, Ms. British Museum, Or. 8273, 13 (a), respectively. (I am indebted to Kister for the latter source.)

and in the preceding revelations and yet they strive to be judged by an obscure devilish and unjust figure called *ṭāghūl*.⁽⁷⁷⁾ The two traditions mentioned above state that the occasion of revelation was a dispute between a Jew and a hypocrite Muslim. The former asked for the arbitration of the Prophet, while the latter preferred another figure who is usually described by Muslim sources in a very negative way but on whose name there is a wide disagreement. However, when the two finally came to the Prophet, he judged in favour of the Jew. On the insistence of the hypocrite to appeal to 'Umar, the two went there. But 'Umar, learning about the whole affair, got angry and killed the hypocrite. The verse was then revealed to Muhammad and Jibrīl named 'Umar *fārūq* because he affected a distinction between truth and falsity.

Reviewing the *tafsīr* traditions and commentaries on this verse, however, reveals a wide diversity of interpretations concerning the names and identities of the people involved in the dispute, the arbitrator preferred by the hypocrite and the involvement of 'Umar in the first place let alone his naming as *fārūq*. In what follows we shall limit ourselves to the information provided on this last issue which is the main concern of the present inquiry.

To start with, there is a variety of traditions attributed to Ibn 'Abbās for the interpretation of this verse. And some sources indeed bring the one which states that Jibrīl named 'Umar *fārūq* following the incident mentioned above. Few of them, however, bring this narrative without attributing it to Ibn 'Abbās adding that when the verse was revealed Jibrīl said that 'Umar affected the distinction between truth and falsity and then the Prophet himself named him *fārūq*.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Others bring the same narrative and attribute it to Ibn 'Abbās but without *isnād* chains.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Finally, only Wāḥidī and Naysābūrī give the full *isnād* of this tradition as follows: Kalbī (d. 146 H.) → Abū Ṣāliḥ (d. 101 H.) → Ibn 'Abbās.⁽⁸⁰⁾

In order to evaluate this tradition we turn to few more sources who bring other traditions from Ibn 'Abbās as well as other

(77) "Have you not marked those who profess that they believe in what has been sent down to you and what has been sent before you; they want to be judged before the *ṭāghūl*, though commanded not to believe in him...".

(78) Zamakhsharī 1/276; Rāzī 3/255-6; Nasafī 1/232-3.

(79) Bayḍāwī 89; Abū al-Sa'ūd 3/320-1; Ibn Ra's Ghanama, *Manāqil al-Durar*, Ms. Chester Beatty 4254, fol. 18 (a). (I am indebted to Kister for the last source.)

(80) Wāḥidī, *Asbāb*, Cairo 1316 H., 120; Naysābūrī 5/84-5.

exegetical authorities. One of these is the pseudo-Ibn 'Abbās *tafsīr* work which, strikingly enough, confirms the involvement of 'Umar by killing the hypocrite, but on the other hand does not mention his naming as *fārūq* on that occasion by either Jibrīl or the Prophet.⁽⁸¹⁾ Ṭabarī too brings a tradition attributed to Ibn 'Abbās through a line of "family *isnād*" from Ibn Sa'd al-'Awfī (d. 276 H.) and going back to this great grandfather 'Aṭīyya (d. 111-27 H.). But this version does not mention the naming of 'Umar as *fārūq* or even his involvement in that incident in the first place.⁽⁸²⁾

A third tradition of Ibn 'Abbās is brought by Wāḥidī on the authority of Ṣafwān b. 'Amr (d. 100-8) and 'Ikrima (d. 104 H.). No mention of the involvement of 'Umar is made here either.⁽⁸³⁾ On the other hand, Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150 H.) says that Jibrīl descended on Muhammad and told him that 'Umar's name was *fārūq* when he killed the hypocrite and the verse was revealed.⁽⁸⁴⁾

From the evidence brought so far we can conclude that connecting 'Umar with the revelation of Qur'ān 4/60 and his heavenly naming as *fārūq* on that occasion became current around the mid-second century by people like Muqātil and Kalbī. One must not forget that only a generation earlier people like 'Aṭīyya al-'Awfī, Ṣafwān b. 'Amr and the transmittor of the pseudo-Ibn 'Abbās source did not mention the involvement of 'Umar in that incident at all. Added to this the various traditions of Mujāhid (d. 103 H.), Sha'bī (d. 103-7 H.), Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110 H.), Qatāda (d. 117-8 H.), Suddī (d. 127 H.), Ḍaḥḥāk (d. 102-5), Sulaymān b. Ṭarkhān (d. 143 H.) and al-Rabī' b. Anas (d. 139-40 H.), brought by Ṭabarī, Wāḥidī and Naysābūrī do not mention such involvement let alone naming 'Umar as *fārūq* on that occasion.

On the whole our investigation reveals some serious gaps in the literary currents of the first half of the second century to link 'Umar and the title *fārūq* to the revelation of 4/60. But this does not mean that such currents were negligible, let alone non-existent. In an attempt to identify their possible source and the

(81) Pseudo-Ibn 'Abbās, *Tanwīr al-Miqbās*, in the margin of Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, Cairo n.d., 1/265-6.

(82) Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, *op. cit.*, 5/98.

(83) Wāḥidī 188-9.

(84) Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, Cairo n.d., 247-8.

driving force behind them one must take into consideration the fact that, in their essence, they reflect a certain belief current during that period that 'Umar possessed some divine attributes and guidance. This can be gauged from the very idea that he has a name, *fārūq*, in heaven and that God or angel Jibrīl gave it to him.

Such belief and the divine and angelic ring to naming 'Umar as *fārūq* gets clear support from a variety of traditions which, although not directly related to the revelation of 4/60 or the occasion of his conversion, speak of him as an inspired man (*muḥaddath*). Other traditions say that God put the truth on his tongue, struck his heart with it, an angel spoke through his tongue or that if there would have been a prophet after Muhammad he should certainly have been 'Umar.

A variety of sources bring such traditions the conduct of full investigation of which lies beyond the scope of this study.⁽⁸⁵⁾ However, in order to give a rough idea on the nature and literary history of these beliefs an attempt will be made at checking the *isnād* and content of some relevant traditions.

Comparing the lists of *isnād* of the traditions brought by Bukhārī and Muslim for 'Umar being a *muḥaddath*, reveals that their common link is Sa'd b. Ibrāhīm al-Zuhri (d. 125-8 H.) who was a Medinese by origin though his legal traditions were usually ignored there and transmitted only by Meccans and Irāqis, mainly from Wāsiṭ.⁽⁸⁶⁾ As for the tradition under review, however, one can discern a Shī'i ring to it in the figure of one of its transmitters, the Kūfan Zakariyyā b. Abī Zā'ida (d. 147-9 H.).⁽⁸⁷⁾ This latter transmitter substitutes *yukallamūn* (being talked to, i.e. by angels) for *muḥaddathūn* adding that such people were among the sons of Israel but, like 'Umar, were not considered prophets.

Another transmitter of this tradition is Ibrāhīm the son of Sa'd, a Medinese who lived in Baghdād (d. 182-3 H.). The Egyptian 'Abdullāh b. Wahb (d. 197 H.), who took it from Ibrāhīm, simply explains that *muḥaddathūn* means "inspired" (*mulhamūn*).⁽⁸⁸⁾

(85) E.g., see Bukhārī 4/200; Muslim 7/115; Ibn Māja 1/40; Dawādārī 3/179-80; Sufyān b. 'Uyayna, *Ḥadīth*, Ms. *Zāhiriyya*, *majmū'* 22/80; Ibn Shādhān, *Ḥadīth*, Ms. *Zāhiriyya*, *majmū'* 87/179.

(86) Bukhārī 4/200; Muslim 7/115. On Sa'd see *Tahdhīb*, 3/463-5.

(87) Bukhārī, *ibid.* On Zakariyyā see *Tahdhīb* 3/329-30.

(88) Muslim, *ibid.*

Ibn 'Ajlān (Muhammad, a Medinese, d. 148 H.) was also mentioned as one of those who transmitted the tradition of Sa'd and, from him, it was taken by notorious traditionists like Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 198 H.) and Layth b. Sa'd (d. 175 H.). It is interesting to see how this latter one was quoted by some lexical sources as saying that God himself called 'Umar *fārūq* and struck the truth on his tongue.⁽⁸⁹⁾

Finally another major *ḥadīth* source, Ibn Māja, brings a variant of this last notion with an interesting chain of *isnād*. It says: "God put the truth on 'Umar's tongue [so that] he says it."⁽⁹⁰⁾ The interesting thing in the *isnād* of this tradition is that it was transmitted by none other than the biographer Ibn Ishāq on the authority of Makhūl the Damascene (d. 113-6 H.).

From this quick glance, it is striking to see how the important *ḥadīth* sources, who completely ignored the idea that 'Umar was called *fārūq* by Muhammad and within the *sīra* framework, are full of traditions on the divine merits and faculties attributed to the man, though not specifically in connection with the revelation of Qur'ān 4/60. However, before this conclusion is carried any further, and pending a further research into the subject, it must be said that other early Muslim figures, especially the first caliphs were also believed to have such divine attributes. The Shī'ite traditional *Book of Sulaym b. Qays* attributes to each of 'Alī, Fāṭima and their descendants the title "*muḥaddath*".⁽⁹¹⁾ On the Sunnī side there are plenty of *ḥadīth*, *sīra* and *manāqib* works which bring traditions to the effect that 'Umar's title, *fārūq*, is written, among those of the other first caliphs (*ṣiddīq* for Abū Bakr, *dhū al-nawrayn* and *shahīd* for 'Uthmān and *riḍā* for 'Alī) on God's throne, the sun's forehead and every leaf of the trees of paradise.⁽⁹²⁾

5) *Fārūq and Ahl al-Kitāb*.

Some sources say that *ahl al-Kitāb* (the people of scripture) were those who gave 'Umar the title "*fārūq*". Most late works bring this view as an alternative to the other ones mentioned above, often without any traditional source or authority and always

(89) Zabidī, 7/43, quoting Ibn Durayd.

(90) *Sunan*, 1/40.

(91) *The Book of Sulaym b. Qays*, Najaf n.d., 181.

(92) Cf. al-Nāzillī, *Mafz'*, 37.

without reference to the specific occasion on which such title was given.⁽⁹³⁾ In what follows an attempt will be made at tackling these problems and possibly understanding who exactly were meant by *ahl al-Kitāb*.

The earliest two sources which give this view are the third century Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Shabba who also provide a full *isnād* for the traditional form they bring it in.⁽⁹⁴⁾ The same tradition is brought also by Balādhurī⁽⁹⁵⁾ and Ṭabarī.⁽⁹⁶⁾ The later sources quote either Ṭabarī or Ibn Sa'd or else generally reiterate the association of this tradition with the name of Zuhri as mentioned by the earlier sources.⁽⁹⁷⁾

A quick glance at the *isnād* chains brought by Ibn Sa'd reveals that, contrary to the other tradition which he brings, namely the above-mentioned one of 'Ā'isha on the Prophet calling 'Umar *fārūq*, this one is from a source of his other than Wāqidī. This other source of Ibn Sa'd is Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd al-Zuhri (d. 208 H.). He was a Medinese who lived in Baghdād and, like his contemporary, Wāqidī, was known for transmitting and circulating *maghāzi* traditions.⁽⁹⁸⁾ The second chain is the father of Ya'qūb, Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd al-Zuhri (d. 182-4 H.) whom we have already met as the source for his other son's, Sa'd's, tradition on 'Umar being a *muḥaddath*. This Ibrāhīm and his sons were reputed for transmitting some of the traditions of their senior relative, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri (d. 124 H.) in a semi-family line. Concerning the tradition under discussion, however, there stands Ṣāliḥ b. Kīsān (Medinese, d. 130-40 H.) as a link between Ibrāhīm and Ibn Shihāb although he was reportedly older than the latter.⁽⁹⁹⁾

As for its content, this tradition relates from Zuhri the saying: "it has reached us that the people of scripture were the first to call 'Umar *fārūq*. The Muslims reported that from them, and it has

(93) E.g., see Zabīdī 7/43 and Qalqashandī 1/87.

(94) *Ṭabaqāt* 3/270 and *Ṭārīkh* 662, respectively.

(95) Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, Ms. Ashir Efendi, Istanbul, 597/8, fols. 829 (a-b). (I am indebted to Kister for this source.)

(96) *Tārīkh* 4/195-6 and *Dhayl al-Mudhayyal* in *op. cit.*, 11/504.

(97) Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 19; Mawṣṣilī, *Ghāyat al-Wasā'il*, Ms. Cambridge, Qq. 10, fols. 124 (a), 179 (b) (I am indebted to Kister for this source); Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd*, 4/57; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī 4(3)/22.

(98) See Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb* 11/380-1.

(99) *Ibid.*, 4/399-401.

not reached us that the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) had mentioned anything of it."

It is clear from the wording of this tradition that either Zuhri or one of his later transmitters were aware of the other view concerning the Prophet as an originator of the title, and that it came to contradict that view. However, this tradition does not give any hint on who exactly were "the people of Scripture" or where and in what circumstances did they consider 'Umar a *fārūq* or called him as such.

In an attempt to fill such a gap we turned to two traditions which provide some clues. One is by Sayf b. 'Umar (the Tamīmī Kūfan, d. 180 H.) and attributed to Sālim b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar (Medinese, d. 105-8 H.).⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Owing to the long span of time between the two, it is plausible to suggest the missing of at least one chain in the *isnād*. Actually this is supported by the way in which Ibn Kathīr introduces the same tradition, where he explicitly says: "Sayf b. 'Umar transmitted from his authorities (*an shuyūkhīhi*) from Sālim who said ...".⁽¹⁰¹⁾

A third source brings the same content of this tradition without *isnād*.⁽¹⁰²⁾ As for its content it states that: "when 'Umar entered Syria (*al-shām*), a Jew from Damascus told him: peace be on you O' *fārūq*, you are the owner of (the matter of) Jerusalem (*'anta ṣāhibu 'ilyā*), by God, you shall not return until God conquers Jerusalem." The tradition goes then to say that, while in Jābiya, 'Umar received a delegation from Jerusalem with whom the terms of peaceful surrender were agreed there. It also adds that the above-mentioned Jew witnessed the peace treaty. He was a man possessing "knowledge" and 'Umar called and asked him about the false Messiah (*al-dajjāl*), etc.

But Ṭabarī brings another version of this tradition with the same *isnād* (Sayf... Sālim) which, however, has some important alterations. It specifies al-Jābiya as the place where 'Umar met the Jew and, more importantly, drops the title *fārūq* given to him on that occasion and substitutes it with "commander of the believers" (*amīr al-mu'minīn*). A later source, Ibn al-Athīr, chose to bring only this latter version and to drop the *isnād* altogether.⁽¹⁰³⁾

(100) Ṭabarī, 3/607-8.

(101) Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, Cairo 1932, 7/58-9.

(102) Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Khāmis min al-Muntazam*, Ms. Zāhiriyya, *History* 62/29.

(103) *Al-Kāmil*, 2/501.

The other occasion on which 'Umar was reportedly called *fārūq* is mentioned by another tradition brought by Ṭabarī. It has two, almost identical variants attributed to Rajā' b. Ḥaywa (d. 112 H.) and Rabī'a al-Shāmī (d. 121-3 H.). Both authorities are Syrian figures and are unique in transmitting this highly isolated tradition on the circumstances of 'Umar's entrance to and prayer in Jerusalem "from people who witnessed that."⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ It says that when 'Umar started to clean the Temple site, the ex-Jew from Palestine and a new convert to Islam, Ka'b al-Aḥbār, "magnified the Lord" (*Kabbara* — as a reaction that a great thing was happening) and people did the same after him. When asked by 'Umar to explain he said: "what you have done today was prophesized by a prophet five hundred years ago." Then, in a very obscure way, the tradition goes on with Ka'b's explanation. He said: "the *rūm* have attacked the sons of Israel, ruled then [and buried the Temple]. Then the sons of Israel ruled but were overrun by the Persians who persecuted them before they accomplished [rehabilitating it]. Then the *rūm* ruled [again] until you governed following which God sent a prophet on the [place of] assembly/garbage who said: good omen, O' Jerusalem, the *fārūq* [has come] upon you to clean you of what in you ..." (... *thumma udīlat al-rūm ilā an walīla, fa-ba'atha allāhu nabiyyan 'alā al-Kunāsati fa-qāl: ibshirī orīshalam 'alayki al-fārūq yunaqqīki mimmā fīki* ...).

Ṭabarī says, as noted above, that the same tradition was transmitted bearing the name of Rabī'a al-Shāmī who, however, adds: "the *fārūq* has come to you with my obedient soldiers and they will take the revenge of your people from the *rūm* ..." (*alāki al-fārūq fī jundī al-muḥī' wa-yudrikūna li-ahliki bi-tha'riki fī al-rūm* ...).

6) Conclusions.

In spite of the apparent differences between the Rajā'-Rabī'a tradition and the one by Sayf-Sālim mentioned above, they have few important common links. Foremost, they both point to the Jews or converts from Judaism as the source for attributing the title "*fārūq*" to 'Umar, a notion which possibly helps to elucidate the rather vague statement by Zuhri that such title was given to

(104) Ṭabarī 3/611-2.

him by *ahl al-Kitāb*. In themselves, these traditions give direct support to the view expressed by Crone and Cook that this title must be seen as an Islamic fossilization of a basically Jewish apocalyptic idea of the awaited messiah. However, the notion strongly conveyed by these two traditions is that the Jews perceived 'Umar as a *fārūq* in connection with his role in delivering Jerusalem from the Byzantines and the resumption of worship on the Temple site, the most sacred place to Judaism.

The occurrence of the title *fārūq* in such context of deliverance fits well into the senses of redemption and salvation born by cognate terms from other Semitic languages current in the area in early Islam and reflecting Judeo-Christian religious concepts of messianic deliverance. And, although such sense was strongly damped by the bulk of Muslim interpretations of this title, some traces of it could still be found in the explanatory sentence of "affecting the distinction between truth and falsity", which is closely associated with it, as well as in the notion that he "demonstrated" or "declared" (*aḡhara, a'lana*) Islam, which it presented in the limited framework of 'Umar's conversion in Mecca, in a way that only adds to such damping.

On the other hand, a clear support to the sense of deliverance can be gauged from similar meanings given to other derivations like *farq, fāriq, and furqān*. To this one must also add the many traditions which say that God or angel Jibril gave 'Umar the title *fārūq*, struck truth on his heart, angels spoke through his tongue, he was an inspired man, etc.

But the idea expressed by the Rajā'-Rabī'a tradition that 'Umar was called *fārūq*/saviour by a prophet who had risen in Jerusalem just after he assumed power is, to say the least, striking. Nothing could equal to it in all the Muslim sources I consulted and, in itself, gives a unique support to the rather bold suggestion forwarded by Crone and Cook that the rise of 'Umar as a redeemer was prophesized and awaited.

Above all, such traditions do not only speak about the Jews being the ones who called 'Umar *fārūq* but present the emergence of this title in a new historical framework and, hence, leave the historian of early Islam with a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, there is the highly vivid, though only semi-historical Jerusalem-Jewish context supported by a strong sense of redemption inherent in the title *fārūq* and conveyed by its Semitic cognates in a way that clearly points to a Judeo-Christian origin of

that concept. And this must be weighed, on the other hand, against few Muslim traditions which constitute only a marginal variant on the stories of 'Umar's conversion in Mecca or his involvement in the revelation of Qur'ān 4/60.

Other things being equal, one would naturally incline to choose the Jerusalem-Jewish context. After all, the present inquiry has raised serious doubts concerning the authenticity of those latter traditions and the possibility of their being mere literary patchings in the Ḥijāzī framework of *sīra* and *tafsīr*. But, because things do not stand on their own and owing to the crucial implications such choice would have on the historical framework of early Islam, we decide not to give any final statement on the matter; a task which the present inquiry did not and could not aim to accomplish in the first place. What it could do, however, is to demonstrate the lack of correlation between the sense of a sharp religious turning point implied in the title *fārūq* and the way the association of such title with 'Umar limited it to the stories of his conversion and his role in connection with the revelation of Qur'ān 4/60. In order to put things in their right proportion, one may suggest to alter the interpretation of the explanatory sentence "*faraqa bayna al-ḥaqq wa-l-bāṭil*" so that instead of "made a distinction between truth and falsity" it will be taken to mean: affected the distinction of the true faith from and as against the false one. But, finally, as it was indirectly shown, such major religious role was not attributed to or expected from only 'Umar but from other figures who bore the title *fārūq* like 'Alī, Muhammad and possibly others too.

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